

Whatcom Community College

Cybersecurity Camps

Project Summary

Recent attacks on computer networks have highlighted the need for a trained cybersecurity workforce. This project will increase the awareness and interest of high school students in the exciting and emerging field of information security and promote their involvement in the next steps towards an educational career pathway. The project's disciplinary focus is Whatcom Community College's Computer Information Systems (CIS) Program. Activities focus primarily on program development and improvement, and curriculum and educational materials development. Principal Investigator Corrinne Sande has extensive experience in information security and holds several industry certifications; she is also an active member of Cyber Watch.

Intellectual Merit of the Proposed Activity

Over the next two years, the project will develop and implement the following strategies: provide outreach and resources to local high schools, offer high school students Cybersecurity Camps at Whatcom Community College (WCC), provide and support College CIS Program mentors for students, and sponsor culminating Cyberdefense Competitions. High school students will be exposed to information security scenarios through hands-on activities and cybersecurity camps and competitions at WCC. Bringing high school students and educators into the information security arena will broaden participation and promote understanding of this critical field. It will strengthen relationships between local county high schools and Whatcom Community College. Student participation is an integral component to this project. Peer mentoring is foundational to activities in the Cybersecurity Camps and Cyberdefense Competitions.

Broader Impacts of the Proposed Activity

This project will increase the depth of understanding and skill level among students potentially preparing for information security jobs. This project will advocate for females and underrepresented populations to be involved in the camps and competitions and to consider information security as a possible career. The project will have significant statewide and national impact. Materials developed for the high school cybersecurity camps and competitions will be made available to other institutions as will manuals for replication. Information will be disseminated both state-wide and nationally (see dissemination plan for details). This project will help support national security by cultivating an interest in high-school students who will further their education in information security and may become part of the pipeline to a well-equipped workforce.